

As an aerobatic pilot and an FAA aerobatic box waiver holder I am deeply concerned that the proposed changes to the Houston area airspace will negatively impact pilot training and safety. The ability of both new and experienced acro pilots to learn and practice in a safe environment is critical. Safe is not just above 1500 feet, away from airways and populated areas. Safe is flying complex maneuvers directly above an emergency landing site in airspace known to other pilots as aerobatic practice box. Separation from other traffic, from the terrain, and a safe emergency landing area are the essence. Other conflicting regulatory items can be handled in the designated FAA waiver. Why over an emergency landing area? Because aerobatics involves flying the aircraft and its engine thru unusual attitudes which, on occasion, can result in unexpected engine shutdowns due to lack of fuel flow and other emergency situations. Obviously an immediately available forced landing site is imperative. Sack-o-Grande airport provides that additional safety margin. Avoiding terrain? Reducing the upper limit of an acro box to less than 3500 feet makes it unusable for most IAC contest pilots as their sequences are specifically designed to begin at 3500 agl. Every pilot is subject to falling out of a "blown" maneuver for whatever reason. Forcing them to fly everything 1000 lower reduces the terrain clearance by at least 25%, thereby reducing the time and altitude available for recoveries from unusual attitudes.

For the above reasons and those stated by other petitioners, and as the Sack-o-Grande aerobatic box will not be a direct hazard to the proposed glide slope at IAH, I urge the FAA to retain the current 4,000 ft AGL box ceiling at Sack-o-Grande.